

Jakovali Hassan Pasha Mosque and Museum

Ottoman Pécs

The battle fought in 1526 near Mohács (46 km from Pécs on road) between Louis II of Hungary and Suleiman the Magnificent is marked in both, Hungarian historiography as well as popular belief, as the end of the medieval Hungarian state and the loss of independence for 400 years. Although even the Hungarian king died in the devastating battle, the Ottoman conquerors would not take Buda, the capital, until 1541 and the city of Pécs until 1543, which both afterwards, together with the biggest and central part of the country remained under direct Ottoman control until 1686. Previously the centre of Renaissance in the region and the seat of Bishops since the beginning of the 11th century, Pécs was gradually turned to an Ottoman city. *Quinque Ecclesiae* or *Quinque Basilicae*, as it was referred to in Latin documents (i.e. 'Five Churches') was now given a predominantly Muslim character; churches were either destroyed or more typically turned to mosques, like it happened to the Pécs Cathedral among others. Only one of them were left in Christian hands, located outside the city walls, and used by the various denominations of Protestantism in the 16th and 17th century, together with the Catholics. The geographical position of the city was ideal for the conquerors: its was far enough from the military frontier in the north and the west, where fights with the Habsburg side were constant, and it was near enough to the Ottoman core lands in the Balkans, primarily to Bosnia. As result Pécs soon became a peculiar oriental commercial centre with great bazaars and Muslim life, an island of peace in the great Hungarian turmoil between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires. On the other hand, similarly to the Balkan cities, taken by the Ottoman Turks centuries earlier, Pécs also grew to be a multi ethnic and multi confessional town. The Turkish and even more numerous South Slavic speaking Muslim settlers brought also a significant number of Orthodox Christians (Serbians) with them. The pre-Ottoman population of this Renaissance city had already been ethnically diverse, including mostly Magyar, German, Croatian and neo-Latin elements, that became even more polarised with the spread of Reformation and Protestantism in Hungary which the Ottoman rulers welcomed, saw favourably and encouraged in the Principality of Transylvania and the Ottoman half of Hungary. They very pragmatic, did not destroy conquered cities, rather used buildings already there, and built relatively few completely new ones. In this regard Pécs may be a striking exception in Hungary, since there is a handful of characteristically Ottoman buildings standing here even today. What they actually did build were mostly connected to religious worship and the peculiar Muslim way of life. Mosque, *Çeşme* (public fountain, spring), *Hamam* (spa, bath house), *Medrese* (religious school), *Imaret* (soup kitchen), Dervish Monasteries, Caravanserais, etc. Today two more remarkable and intact Ottoman buildings can be visited in town: the Mosque of Gazi Qasim Pasha and the Türbe of Idris Baba (mausoleum). Additionally, the ruins of the Bath of Memi Pasha and the ones of the Mosque of Ferhad Pasha can still be seen, while the southern wall of the Catholic Church of St. Augustine also bears visible elements of Ottoman architecture. The ruins of a Renaissance palace, later converted to a dervish monastery and called Tettye (*Tekke* in Turkish), are located on the way to the Mecsek Hills.

The Construction of the Mosque

The Mosque of Jakovali Hassan Pasha is the best preserved mosque in Hungary. Today it functions both, as a museum and also as a place of worship. It was built just outside the western city walls, near Szigetvár Gate, not far from the Mosque of Memi Pasha within the city, the ruins of whose bath, as already mentioned above can be still seen today. His mosque used to be where the present day Franciscan Church is. We do not know exact year of construction of the Jakovali Hassan Pasha Mosque, it is thought to be take place sometime around the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries or even later, in the 1630s. On the other hand we do know that Jakovali Hassan Pasha

was a grandson of Memi Pasha (short for Mehmed, in Aracic Mohamed), therefore the chosen location of the mosque, outside the confines of the city, yet very close to Memi Pasha's compound makes perfect sense. According to contemporary Ottoman Law, called the Timar System, all conquered territories nominally belonged to the Sultan, therefore land could not be personally owned, possessed, inherited or sold, but it could be awarded by the Port to individual Timar holders for temporary use, as a compensation of outstanding merit, mostly in the military as cavalrymen. Timars holders were responsible for collecting tax and paying annual revenue to the Sultan. Their assigned land could be taken back from them any time, without much explanation, and since it could not be inherited either, it was inevitably taken back the latest when the Timar holder died. Since it neither could be sold, rich Timar holders were encouraged to establish their own religious foundations, called *Vakf*, that were tax exempt and could under no circumstances be legally confiscated. The relatively lately established *Vakf* of Jakovali Hassan Pasha must have been constructed in the vicinity of the already existing one of his grandfather's, only having the western city wall in between the two religious compounds. Originally it included a number of buildings, which were destroyed during the 18th century, following the Habsburg 'reconquest', Baroque reconstruction and the building of the present day hospital immediately on the compound. The original *Vakf* in the 17th century included the following: the actual mosque, a mevlevi dervish monastery, a religious school, a soup kitchen for the poor and travelers, garden and cemetery.

Jakovali Hassan Pasha

Jakovali Hassan Pasha was a very important figure in the European part of the Ottoman Empire, but was not from Pécs itself and neither held any formal position in this city.

What we know for certain is that he was the Pasha of Kanizsa (Kanizsa Vilayet, a late formed Ottoman province in Western Hungary), and later became the Beglerbeg of Bosnia Vilayet, the most important position in the Western Balkans. As already mentioned, he had family ties in the city. Memi Pasha, his paternal grandfather moved to Pécs at the beginning of the Ottoman times, and consequently was well established here. His grandmother was even related to the famous Sokollu dynasty, the top elite of Ottoman society. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha (*Mehmed-paša Sokolović*) was born a Bosnian Serb peasant boy, forcibly taken to the Janissary Corps (*devşirme*) and later became the Grand Vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent (1494–1566). Jakovali is not a family name; it refers to the town of Hassan Pasha's origin, called Jakova or in modern Turkish spelling *Yakova*. In the European part of the Empire there are only two towns that were called Jakova (*Yakova*) by the Turks. One of them is in Kosovo today and called *Gjakova* in Albanian and *Djakovica* in Serbian, and the other one is *Djakovo* in Slavonia, just across the Drava River, in North-Eastern Croatia today, only 104 km from Pécs on road. Hassan Pasha, therefore, must have been either a Kosovar or a Slavonian by origin.

After the Ottoman Era

With the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) Christian rule was re-established in the previously Ottoman parts of Hungary (with the exception of the Banat) and also in the satellite Principality of Transylvania by the Habsburg Monarchy. The Muslim and the Jewish population of Hungary left with the retreating Ottoman army to the Balkans, in the case of the Jews mostly to Constantinople, in fear of the Catholic newcomers and the forthcoming Habsburg terror. The city of Pécs, similarly to the rest of the newly gained country, was being reorganised and restructured. Since the Bishopric *de jure* never ceased to exist, this work was assigned to the newly appointed ambitious bishop Ferenc Nesselrode (Franciscus de Nesselrod). After the long decades of war, invading and retreating armies and population moves (Catholic settlers were invited to come to the city, mostly Bosnian Croats and later also Southern Germans) Hungary in general and Pécs in particular became an extremely impoverished and rundown place, with unseen number of poor,

sick and hopeless people. As the Jakovali Hassan compound among else had already served humanitarian purposes by helping the poor and the ones in need Bishop Nesselrode donated it to the Franciscan order, which established its headquarters near by, inside the city walls, within the previous Memi Pasha *Vakf* and turned that mosque to the present day Franciscan Church. Once again the Jakovali Hassan and the Memi Pasha establishments grew together, now by the friars, converting the Jakovali Hassan compound the town spital, the predecessor of the Baroque and later the modern hospital, the chapel of which the actual Jakovali Hassan Pasha Mosque was made. It was consecrated and dedicated to St. John of Nepomuk in the early 18th century and continued serving Catholic patients up until 1950, when it was nationalised, following the dissolution of religious orders in Socialist Hungary. During the early 18th century rebuilding the mosque/chapel externally stayed much the way it was, while inside it was given a characteristic Baroque look. Islamic decoration was replaced by Catholic frescoes and a Baroque altar was also installed. The spital was founded most probably in 1714, which meant the destruction of the old Islamic compound, apart from the mosque. After nationalisation a proper archeological research was ordered and consequently carried out by the Socialist state, during which the reconstruction of the mosque, with as many of its original Islamic features as possible was finally completed in 1955 – 1961. According to a special bilateral agreement appropriate Islamic furniture and inner decoration was brought into the Mosque of Jakovali Hassan Pasha from Turkey, and Muslim worship resumed in the city, little less than 300 years after the last Ottoman left Pécs. The reconstructed building was given a dual function from then on: besides being a Muslim place of worship it also served as a city museum, with a permanent exhibition on Hungarian Ottoman life and since 2010 also on Islam in general.

The Exhibition in the Foreground of the Mosque

The foreground of the mosque has been an integral part of the building of the hospital since its construction in the early 18th century. 20th century archeological excavations uncovered the foundations of the monastery of the Mevlevi dervishes that can be seen here today. During those works the covered entryway attached to the door of the mosque on the north-western side was also unearthed. The entryway could not be reconstructed fully. Experts believe that it must have either been a simple thatched roof structure on columns or a hall separated from the outside by walls. The decorated columns currently exhibited here are also Islamic and from Pécs but do not belong to this mosque, they were brought here from the Mosque of Gazi Qasim Pasha in the city centre. (see above) The main mosque in town was only partly reconstructed in the 20th century, today it is still administered by the bishopric and serves as the Downtown Candlemas Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Some objects of Islamic relevance, however, were brought over here, to the Ottoman Museum when it opened to the public in the 1960s. Such entryways in Islam normally function as the place for socialising before and after prayer, this is where religious texts are studied and ritual washing also happens here. Today on the walls of the foreground the history of the mosque and the Mevlevi order can be read, unfortunately only in Hungarian, and also pictures and a map of similar mosques in the territory of the formal Ottoman Empire can be seen. Additionally, the musical instruments and the traditional clothing of the dervishes are also on exhibit.

The Mevlevi Dervishes

The Mevlevi order received its name from *Mevlana*, the Turkish word for ‘Our Master’ that refers to the 13th century Persian Sufi mystic Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi-Rumi, whose teachings the dervishes followed and whom they regarded as their spiritual leader. Colloquially they are also referred to as the Whirling Dervishes. Their centre is in the Anatolian city of Konya and in the 17th century had monasteries all around the Ottoman lands, among which Pécs was their northernmost settlement with permanent presence, within the *Vakf* of Jakovali Hassan Pasha,

their great supporter. According to contemporary testimonies (Evliya Çelebi, Ottoman traveler) the Pasha was an admirer of the Sufi teachings, spirituality and mysticism and also highly appreciated the music and dance of the dervishes. It also appears in the records that he himself also played their instruments, especially the flute, even in the presence of the Sultan. The ruins of another Dervish Monastery in town are located in a place called 'Tettye', on the way up to the Mecsek Hills. (The Turkish word *Tekke* means Dervish Monastery.)

The Mosque

The Mosque of Jakovali Hassan Pasha is a typical Ottoman mosque of its time, similar ones were built all over the vast territory of the Empire, stretching out in three continents. It is a characteristic piece of classical Ottoman architecture, introduced by the greatest architect in Istanbul, Mimar Sinan (1489-1588). It was made mostly of local stone, with brick additions at certain places. The lower part of the building is rectangular with an octagonal continuation on it that is supporting the circular dome itself. As mosques must it is facing Mecca, therefore oriented to the South-East. The entrance to the building is on the opposite side, where its minaret is attached to it, at its North-Western corner. The tympanum above the door has preserved its original, rich and detailed stalactite ornaments, which are the finest example of Islamic adornment in Hungary. The liturgically most important wall of the mosque is located opposite the entrance and facing Mecca. It is called the *Qibla* and bears the *Mihrab*, indicating the exact direction of the holy city of Islam, the one to bow down toward when praying. Like the door, is also richly decorated but some of its stalactite ornaments are 20th century reconstruction. Here the signature of Jakovali Hassan Pasha is still visible. The finely carved rosewood furniture was a gift from the Turkish Republic and it includes the outstanding pulpit or *mimber*. On both sides of the entrance there are separated platforms for the women and children, as Islam, similarly to Judaism, requires the separation of the two sexes when praying. Wall paintings are original and in the state they could be recovered during reconstruction. They are a combination of geometric and tendril patterns, as well as Arabic inscriptions. On both sides of the *Mihrab* there are intelligible Surahs from the Quran. The Seal of Suleiman (*Mührü Süleyman*), the name of God (*Besmele*, in Arabic *Bismillah*), the Muslim Creed, the names of Allah and Mohamed and a depiction of the Kaaba are also clear and identifiable.

The Garden and the Minaret

The garden of the mosque is located within the territory of the county hospital and can not be seen from the street. It may be either approached from the mosque or alternatively, by entering the yard of the hospital behind. On the edge of the small garden a few Islamic tombstones are placed. The actual historic Muslim graveyard did not survive, but the tombstones there are real, they were uncovered in the area during reconstruction and other construction works and now fixed on modern concrete pedestals. Some of them are simple, other ones are turban shaped; they belonged to Hajjis, the pilgrims who did at least once the *Hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca, required by Islam. The garden is the best place to see the minaret in its full totality, which is a dodecagon cross-sectioned, 25 metre tall slim tower, with its balcony on 22.5 metre. This is the only Ottoman structure in Hungary with strikingly colourful ceramic embellishment on it. Unfortunately today it is statically not firm enough to bear visitors, therefore nobody is allowed to climb up to the balcony any more. The entrance to it is inside the mosque, above the women's section. The exit to the balcony is also facing Mecca, similarly to the entire mosque itself. The minaret was built together with the mosque and integral part of it. Apart from the metal banister of the balcony and the very tip of the tower (those were added between 1873 and 1880) it is original, intact and the only surviving mosque – minaret combination in Hungary.

THE WAY OF ALLAH

Temporary exhibition in the display room of the Jakovali Hasan Mosque, Pécs

The „Five Pillars of Islam” / arkan al-islam/ is the collective term for the five duties that are incumbent on every Muslim. The individual „pillars” are illustrated in the five indoor exhibition cases.

1./ The profession of faith – al-shahadah / on the ceiling in the middle of the exhibition hall/ Shahadah is a statement of monotheism. It professes the Oneness of Allah and accepts Muhammad as God's messenger: „*I profess that/ there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God*”.

2./ Ritual prayer – al-salat

Every Muslim is expected to pray five times a day:

1. At dawn, when it is hard to distinguish between a white thread and a black one.
2. At midday, when the sun has just passed its zenith but the shadow an object casts is not as long as the object itself.
3. In the afternoon, between the midday prayer and sunset.
4. At sunset, when the sun has dipped below the horizon but it is not dark yet.
5. At night, between the time the red light leaves the western sky and the white light appears in the east (ideally around midnight).

Every grown Muslim of sound mind is obliged to pray, although travellers may curtail their prayers. Although it is preferable for a Muslim to worship in a mosque with others, he or she.

May pray almost anywhere. On Fridays the midday prayer is replaced by so-called 'Friday prayers' in the mosque, when worshippers listen to a sermon /hutbe/.

The body must be cleansed before worship. Before praying, each Muslim must perform ablutions according to a strict set of rules. Only clean water may be used for washing. Should water not be readily available (for instance in the desert), the face and hands may be scrubbed with clean sand.

All prayers are recited while facing Mecca. In a mosque, the direction of Mecca is indicated by a 'mihrab' niche in the wall.

Reciting the prayers each day reminds Muslims of Allah's power and constant and ubiquitous presence, and helps them avoid sin.

2.1 *Koran / Qur'an*, in a blue decorated box. 20th century. Dimensions of book: 9,5x6,5x3cm.

Dimensions of box: 13x11x5cm. Hungarian Geographic Museum. Koran: woodblock printed, with gold and blue paper cover. Decorated box: covered with blue velvet, wooden box lined with white silk and with a copper fastening. Gyula Germanus's property; from the estate of Gyula Germanus.

2.2 *Tespih / prayer beads*. 99+4 beads, wooden. 20th century. Castle Museum, Budapest.

3./ Alms-giving – al-zakat

It is obligatory for every Muslim to help others and engage in charitable works. They give to the needy, make donations and set up charitable foundations to help the poor. Each year they pay *zakat* (alms giving tax), which is 2.5 percent of their wealth; schools, libraries and hospitals benefit from this money. The soul of the believer is purified by charitable giving and so they can get closer to Allah. Note: in the Ottoman Empire charitable foundations were known as *vakuf*.

3.1 *Panel*: „The best of all people is be who avails people”. (A saying attributed to the Prophet).

Panel in celi thuluth muthanna script. Calligraphy by Mehmed Özçay, illumination: Fatma Özçay. H.1418/M, 1998. Dimensions of panel: 41x36cm. Gift from the Turkey.

3.2 Twenty pieces of *akche* coins. Silver, 16-17th century. Castle Museum, Budapest. From László Zolnay's 1963 excavation, Budapest I. Tárnok u. 11.

4./ Fasting – al sawm

Each year, in the month of *Ramadan* – the ninth month according to the Islamic calendar – all healthy adult Muslims must fast from dawn until sundown. They must abstain from food, drink, tobacco and sexual relations. Those who are sick, elderly or travelling, and also women who are pregnant or

nursing, are permitted to break the fast. Although fasting is considered beneficial to health, it is mainly intended as a method of self-purification and self-restraint. By distancing oneself from worldly comforts – even for a short time – a person who is fasting can focus on his or her purpose in life through being constantly aware of the presence of God.

4.1 *Bowl. Pottery.* Painted under colourless glaze in yellow and green. Mid-16th century. Height: 8,7cm, diameter: 20cm. Castle Museum, Budapest.

5./ Pilgrimage – al-hajj

The pilgrimage to Mecca (the *hajj*) is an obligation only for those who are physically and materially capable of undertaking it. Every able-bodied Muslim is expected to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime – if they can afford it.

Pilgrims wear special clothes – simple garments that remove all distinctions of class and culture, so that equal before God. They must dress in *ihram* clothing, which consists of two white sheets. This is what they wear when they approach the Kaaba, where the Black Stone is set into a corner as the symbol of Muslim faith. Imposing columns surround the area where the Kaaba is situated. Believers enter this colonnade, called the 'Gate of Salvation' (*bab al – salam*), and then the sanctuary. Non-Muslim are not allowed within 50km of the area.

The ritual of the *hajj*, involves walking seven times around the Kaaba and covering seven times the distance between the nearby hills of Safa and Marwa. Pilgrims later pray in the Mina Valley for a day. Then they migrate to Musdalifa and back to Mina, where they stone the columns symbolising the Devil. There then follows a ritual animal sacrifice.

- 5.1 *Pilgrim's bag.* Leather, embossed, embroidered with geometric patterns, with one compartment and a small hidden pocket. Secured with a leather strap. Cairo, 1934; from the estate of Gyula Germanus.
- 5.2 *Pilgrim's belt.* Leather, embossed with geometric patterns, with a metal buckle and three pockets. Secured with a double leather strap. Cairo, 1934. from the estate of Gyula Germanus.
- 5.3 *Tespih* (string of prayer beads) *and bag.* Wood/velvet. Length of string of prayer beads: 72cm and 99 wood; from the estate of Gyula Germanus.
- 5.4 *Ihram/pilgrim's clothing.* Calico, two white sheets.; from the estate of Gyula Germanus.

Whirling dervishes (entrance hall)

Whirling dervishes – mevlevi in Turkish – represented the most learned and perhaps the most reserved religious order in the Ottoman Empire. During the ceremony, they sought to get closer to Allah with their unique dancing style: spinning or 'whirling' according to a strictly prescribed ritual. They believed that, since the entire universe – from planets to atoms – orbits and revolves, humans can get in tune with the rest of creation by behaving similarly. They were assisted in entering a trance-like state by music, which they strove to appreciate, to understand and to perfect. It is no coincidence that they became the best musicians in the Ottoman Empire.

Clothing of a mevlevi dervish (21st century, Konya, Turkey. Private collection):

1. *Dervish mitre/cap/sikke.* Felt.
2. *Sleeveless white frock/tennure.* Calico.
3. *Waistcoat/jelek.* Calico.
4. *Khirqa.* Calico, long-sleeved jacket and black overcoat.
5. *Belt.* Cotton canvas, black belt, keeps the white shirt of a dervish together.

Mevlevi musical instruments (20th century, Istanbul, Turkey. Private collection):

1. *Flute made from a reed/nej.* Reed, walnut.
2. *A pair of small, hemispherical drums/kodüm.* Red copper, goatskin, hemp rope.
3. *Tanbur.* Walnut and cherry wood, nylon frets, metal strings.